

UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine

Dedicated to increasing knowledge about safe and effective complementary and integrative medicine approaches.

Meet Karen Tombs-Harling

We are pleased to welcome Karen Tombs-Harling to the staff at the Center for Integrative Medicine. ‘Kerry’ is an Ayurveda practitioner. Western medicine approaches are quite effective in treating many acute conditions such as strep throat. However, many individuals have chronic and disabling symptoms that don’t respond to standard medical therapies. A whole systems approach such as Ayurveda may offer other options. As diagnosis and treatment within this approach is individualized, research on Ayurveda is limited.



“Hello my name is Kerry and I come from London, England. I am not a doctor, I’m an Ayurvedic Practitioner. I don’t have extensive equipment, I don’t run lab tests. I use my training in Ayurveda

and I use information...I educate. I help people balance their health through diet, lifestyle and herbs.” This is how I start off my workshops and public speaking engagements. Then I go on to tell my health story to many who can identify with an overstressed life and a myriad of health symptoms that are ignored in favor of “just carrying on”.

What is Ayurveda?

Ayurveda, one of the world’s oldest medical systems originating in India, means literally, “the science of life”. Ayurveda takes into account at all aspects of our lives and focuses on treating the individual, not the disease. The goal is not to use “quick fix” tactics, but to uncover the root cause and teach us how to prevent disease. Ayurveda speaks of daily and seasonal routines that help maintain health and longevity. When we do not live within these routines, it creates stress on the system, which can cause the body to break down. A person’s distinctive make-up or metabolic constitution is called *dosha*. Your dosha is an expression of your physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral characteristics. The doshas, or body types, reflect three main governing principles: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. We each have a unique combination of these three principles; different proportions of each dosha existing within us. The healthiest practices for each individual can be best understood by knowing one’s dosha.

What do you do in your practice?

Ayurveda employs a holistic, highly personal approach to diagnosis. I look at several factors: body-type analysis, tongue

reading, pulse diagnosis, skin analysis, digestive strength, and overall well-being. Coupling these with listening to your symptoms and concerns help to find and address imbalances of the body. Then I can determine your metabolic constitution or dosha, which is really your blue-print for living a life full of vitality and health. Once you know your blueprint, I can create a personalized plan that that contains the foods that are right for you; a lifestyle plan that includes the best time to eat and sleep and which exercise is most beneficial.

How did you first learn about Ayurveda and traditional healing systems?

They say that one doesn’t choose Ayurveda, Ayurveda chooses you. I was exposed to complementary forms of healing when my mother was dealing with pancreatic cancer. She ultimately died from her disease, but her quality of life was greatly improved by using nutritional and herbal supplements. After years working in higher education, I found myself personally burned out. I was stressed, my weight was up, my joints hurt, and I was not sleeping well. I developed digestive problems, headaches, and sinus infections. My moods were up and down, I was becoming forgetful and irritable. I relied upon caffeine to get me going and wine to de-stress and unwind. My own health journey led to diagnoses of mercury toxicity and fibromyalgia. It was a blessing when I lost my job in education. I knew I needed to make some changes. That was when I turned to yoga and naturopathic medicine.

How does a person study this practice and develop the skills needed to help people?

I studied at the Kripalu Center for Ayurveda & Yoga in Massachusetts and with The Ayurveda Institute in New Mexico. I’m certified as an Ayurveda Practitioner with the National Ayurveda Medical Association (NAMA). Like any other vast body of knowledge, one is always learning and I continue to study daily.

Are there certain kinds of problems that respond especially well to Ayurveda?

In Ayurveda, we believe that healing starts from within. The idea of prescribing a sedative herb to relieve insomnia or a laxative to relieve constipation is contrary to Ayurvedic philosophy. Ayurveda teaches that when the root cause of an imbalance is treated rather than just the symptoms, the body can heal itself.

Take the case of Claudia, who came to see me because she was overweight, tired, irritable, and was addicted to sugar. Her physician told her if she didn’t lose weight, she would need to take cholesterol lowering medication. She was also suffering from headaches, shortness of breath and had hot flashes after eating any processed foods. I put her through a seven-day detoxification program. Throughout this period Claudia took an herbal formula with her meals to aid in her digestive processes. After the detoxification, I slowly replaced the foods Claudia ate

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with nourishment that was right for her metabolic type and put her on two herbal formulas. We tweaked her diet over the next 2 months and now she is feeling amazing. From this point forward, I will work on adjusting Claudia's diet, and in the Spring, we will do a further program to remove any toxins. This is what I received from her:

"... I was on 2 months probation because of my borderline high cholesterol numbers. I followed the ayurvedic plan for those 2 months and my doctor said my numbers are good and I don't have to go on medication and he also said "good job on your diet!" First time in a long time I got positive feedback from him! Thanks for all your help."

Are there some basic things a person can do to promote health?

Oh yes, there are some very simple things we can all do which will make a huge difference to how we feel:

- Wake up before sunrise

- Drink a glass of warm water when you wake up—before your coffee
- Do some light yoga or stretching daily
- Have a nutritious breakfast according to your body type
- Eat your biggest meal of the day at lunch
- Finish dinner by 7 PM
- Never eat on the run
- Eat freshly cooked or prepared meals
- Get to bed by 11pm

Anything else you would like people to know?

I am happy to be offering Ayurveda at UPMC's Center for Integrative Medicine where I can work alongside other clinicians to help make a significant dent in some of the toughest health challenges of our times. We work to help people manage problems with obesity, stress, depression, and poor nutrition.

Mindful Yoga, by Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT

"I can't sit still long enough to meditate." "My mind is too busy." "I'm not the type." These are common excuses that many people give for not trying meditation. They all rest on misconceptions and stereotypes that teachers, researchers, healthcare professionals, and the mainstream media are steadily dismantling.

In December 2014, as part of the *60 Minutes* segment, "Mindfulness," Anderson Cooper surrendered his cell phone and electronic devices to attend a weekend mindfulness meditation retreat. He did not characterize himself as the meditating type.

When interviewed about his experience, he described himself as "totally skeptical but respectful." "It's rare that you do a story like this," he said, "and find that it actually kind of changes your life."

Footage of Cooper's mindfulness meditation retreat showed periods of sitting practice, the posture many people most strongly associate with meditation. It also highlighted walking and eating meditation.

Mindfulness is an intentional, present-moment, non-judgmental awareness that can be cultivated in a variety of ways. Yoga, like walking meditation, can be practiced as a form of moving meditation, which can help make mindfulness practice accessible for students who find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.

Yoga has its own stereotypes and misconceptions. It can be intimidating if it is seen as being only for people who are flexible or athletic; people who can already do the postures "right". Yoga, when taught within a mindfulness context, helps to see through this kind of commentary and judgment. It offers a way of connecting to the present moment through the direct experience of bodily sensations. A busy, wandering mind is not an impediment to this; it is part of the process. Body sensations become the meditation anchor, so when the mind wanders, it is brought back to the sensations in the body again and again. It doesn't matter how many times this happens; what is important is the work of noticing when the mind is no longer present, and then patiently, gently bringing it back to the body.

Mindful yoga involves practicing a sustained, mindful awareness of the body as it moves, stretches, balances, and works to support its own weight. This provides a way to cultivate a particular kind of relationship with the body and with what arises in the present moment. Learning to intentionally meet the experience of each yoga posture with mindful non-judgmental awareness has profound implications for how we meet the situation, people, and anxieties of life off the yoga mat.

Mindful Yoga, as it is offered at the Center for Integrative Medicine, involves the combination of gentle yoga poses or asanas, awareness of breathing, and persistent, supportive encouragement to keep the mind in the present moment. A legitimate concern is the possibility of hurting oneself by doing things before your body is ready. The focus on awareness of body helps make this a safe and relaxing experience.

60 Minutes "Overtime" Segment: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-newly-mindful-anderson-cooper/>

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Research Opportunities

HEAL Study

When you work with a health care provider, what contributes to improved health?

Is it the attitude and behavior of the patient? The expertise and caring of the health care provider? Is it acupuncture needles, medications, or a combination of these treatments?

Center for Integrative Medicine researchers Carol Greco, PhD; Ronald Glick, MD; Michael Schneider, DC, PhD, and their team are hoping, with your help, to learn more about the important factors that help people to heal. The University of Pittsburgh has received funding from the National Institutes of Health-National Centers for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, to study patients' ideas about what helps them to improve their health. The overall goal of the **HEAL Study**, is to develop and test questionnaires to measure the important contextual factors in treatment from the patient's perspective.

Who can participate in the HEAL Study?

People with back pain or neck pain who receive services at the Center for Integrative Medicine may be eligible to participate if they:

- are starting treatment at the Center for Integrative Medicine.
- expect to continue the treatment with their CIM provider for at least several weeks.
- are able to read and understand English.
- are willing and able to complete questionnaires on a computer.

Participants will be asked to complete computer-based questionnaires regarding their attitudes and opinions about their healthcare. Each of three sessions will require 30 minutes to 1 hour. The computer assessments will take place approximately one month apart and can be completed at CIM or at any location with internet access. Participants will be paid up to \$100.

For more information please call 412-623-2374

PRIMIER

Patients Receiving Integrative Medicine Interventions
Effectiveness Registry

Help advance Integrative Medicine by participating
in the **PRIMIER** study.

The UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine is one of 14 integrative medicine clinics across the US participating in PRIMIER – the first large-scale national project to evaluate patients experiences with integrative medicine. PRIMIER's goal is to better understand the types of integrative medicine interventions patients are receiving, clinical outcomes, and quality of life. This large database will help provide information to evaluate the effectiveness of integrative medicine for many medical conditions.

Please participate in this important study!

- All persons receiving services at the Center for Integrative Medicine are eligible
- The study involves online questionnaires only – you can participate from home
- You will be asked to complete up to 7 questionnaires over a period of 2 years
- Each questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete



“...we are faced with a quandary. We believe that integrative medicine services enhance clinical care and outcomes and likely can provide cost savings. Unfortunately, these services are largely self-pay and beyond the resources of many patients. The only way this will change is through documentation of the efficacy, effectiveness, and economic benefit.” – Ron Glick, MD, CIM Medical Director

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2015 Lectures and Classes at the UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine

UPMC Employees receive 75 Take a Healthy Step points for attending. All lectures and classes at CIM.

February, 2015

Mon. 02/02 -02/23	2:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Mindful Yoga (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Mon. 02/02 -02/23	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Kripalu Yoga Level I (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Mon. 02/02	7:00 – 8:15 p.m.	Monthly Mindfulness Intro. MBSR Orientation	Free	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Wed. 02/04 -02/25	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Yoga Level 2 (4 classes)	\$50	Alicja W. Walczak, MS, CRS
Thurs. 02/12	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.	MBSR Orientation <u>Registration for class!</u>	Free	Carol Greco, PhD Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Thurs. 02/19	5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Acupuncture “ Options for Chronic and Acute Pain”	Free	EngKeat Teh, LAc, MAc
Wed. 02/25-04/15 Thurs. 02/26-04/16	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Mindfulness - Based Stress Reduction (8 Classes) Meditation	\$300	Carol Greco, PhD Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Wed. 2/25-4/15	12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Mindfulness-Based Anxiety Reduction (8 classes)		Dinnie Goldring, LCSW

March, 2015

Mon. 03/02 -03/23	2:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Mindful Yoga (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Mon. 03/02 -03/23	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Kripalu Yoga Level I (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Mon. 03/02	7:00 – 8:15 p.m.	Monthly Mindfulness Intro. MBSR Orientation	Free	Carol Greco, PhD Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Wed. 03/04 -03/25	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Yoga Level 2 (4 classes)	\$50	Alicja W. Walczak, MS, CRS
Thurs. 03/19	5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	“Treating Headaches with Acupuncture”	Free	Tricia Smith, LAc

April, 2015

Mon. 03/30 -04/20	2:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Mindful Yoga (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Mon. 03/30 -04/20	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Kripalu Yoga Level I (4 classes)	\$50	Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Wed. 04/01 -04/22	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Yoga Level 2 (4 classes)	\$50	Alicja W. Walczak, MS, CRS
Mon. 04/06	7:00 – 8:15 p.m.	Monthly Mindfulness Intro. MBSR Orientation	Free	Carol Greco, PhD Deanna Burkett, MA, MS, RYT
Thurs. 04/16	5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	“Treating Migraines Naturally”	Free	Sari Cohen, ND

UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine Team

Neal Ryan, MD, *Director*

Ronald Glick, MD, *Medical Director*

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Administrative Assistant
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Deborah Grice Conway, PhD
Psychotherapist
James Donnelly, MA
Psychotherapist
Dinnie Goldring, LCSW
Meditation Instructor
Carol Greco, PhD
*Assistant Professor of Psychiatry,
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John Laird, ND
Naturopath/Nutritionist

David Lesondak, BCSI
Structural Integrator

Dan Miller, DC
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Kate Sherman, MSCP
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Erin Simon, LMT, LLCC
Massage Therapist

Greg Thorkelson, MD
Psychiatrist

Tricia Smith, LAc, M.S.
Acupuncturist

K.K. Teh, LAc, MAc
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Alicja W. Walczak, MS,
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Instructor*